

LINDA PARSONS

Be Peace

Stone for my pillow, no cover
for my bed, another night wrestling

my better angels for a rung up the ladder—
visitation of dead dog, dead love moldering

in the garden's back corner. Not even
ring-eyed sleeplessness calms my dragon

nature. I exhale heat and havoc, mishmash
of what happened on its endless reel:

Venus in retrograde, Mercury in Leo,
misalignments and stirrings, the gone forever.

The eight worldly winds of samsara swirl—
wheels grinding out sorrow, blame, retribution.

Then I sit in the green chair, picture
the rowboat's sway, petals of jade light,

the riverrock's descent into quiet. I sink
in over my head. Two herons trace

an awkward contrail, nothing like kitetails
or wedding veils, but signs of lives cast

off, flown far. Impossible blessings
I breathe in, pure as burned sage—

the breath unswayed, rooted in everything
sacred and still, even peace.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Linda Parsons' fourth poetry collection is *This Shaky Earth* (Texas Review Press 2016). Her work has also appeared in *The Georgia Review*, *The Iowa Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Southern Poetry Review*, and *Shenandoah*. She is recently retired after nearly thirty years as an editor at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. She is the reviews editor of *Pine Mountain Sand & Gravel*, playwright-in-residence for The Hammer Ensemble of the Flying Anvil Theatre, and a freelance editor.

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